Mississippi Star

HANCOCK COUNTY LIBRARY S
312 HIGHWAY 90
BAY ST. LOUIS, MS 39520-3595

PERMIT #96
BAY ST. LOUIS,
MS 39520

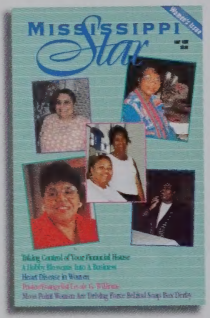
FEBRUARY 1999
$2.00

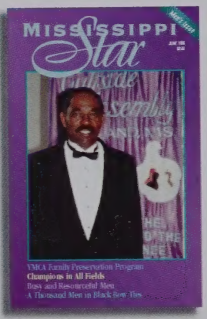
p Daniels Is About Business

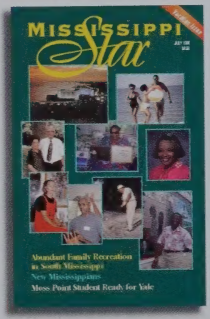
Inspiring Historical African American

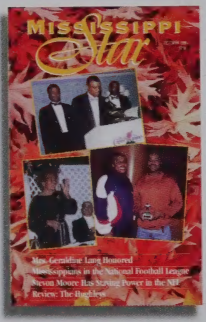
Hancock County Library
312 HWY 90
Bay St. Louis 39520

Mississippi Star 1998









Looking Forward to Another Wonderful Year!

MISSISSIPPI Star

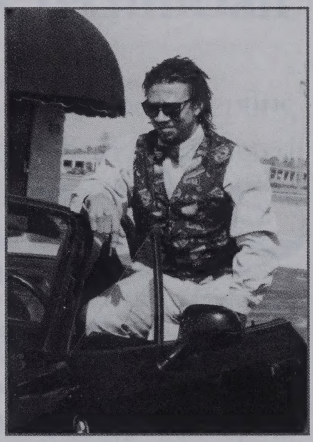
HANCOCK COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM
312 HIGHWAY 90
BAY ST. LOUIS, MS 39520-3595

VOL. 3 NO. 6 FEBRUARY 1999

CONTENTS

DEPARTMENTS

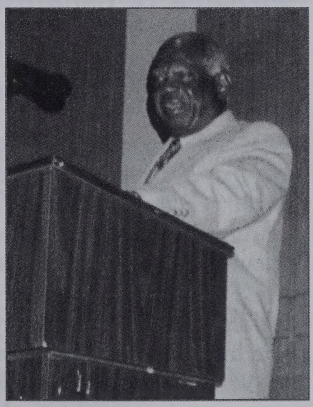
4 Publisher's Page
8 Book Review
10 People
25 Briefs
26 Calendar



Rip Daniels on the go with his Radio and Real Estate Businesses...page 14

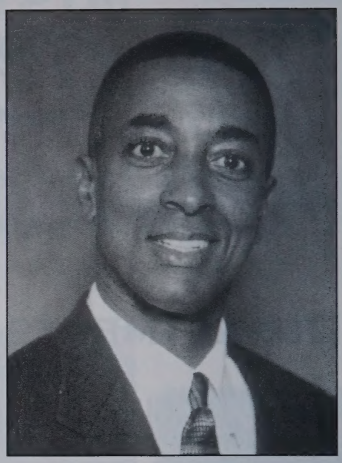
FEATURES

10 Opinion: An Inspiring African American
14 Rip Daniels Is About Business
21 Guest Word: Bruce Northridge Discusses a Key Player in Civil Rights Struggle



Guest Word features J.L. Chestnut, Jr....page 21

PUBLISHER'S PAGE



Maurice Singleton

History can be such a powerful lesson. It can empower us with insight, inspiration, enthusiasm, identity and confidence, among other things. History can affirm or confirm things about ourselves of which we may not be sure. History can provide us with perspective.

Regardless of whether it is world history, national history, state history, local history, church history or even family history, we can become empowered by the resilience of people or communities or churches that have survived, thrived or triumphed despite what may have appeared to be unconquerable obstacles.

And history doesn't have to be ancient to impact our lives in positive ways. History can be recent. In fact, I can't imagine - for me, anyway - a more inspiring period in history than the 1960's. My life and the lives of my peers were impacted greatly by the events of the 1960's.

Protests, sit-ins, wade-ins, riots, rebellions, marches and other forms of protests showed the frustrations of a people hungering for real participation in the freedoms outlined in the Constitution of the United States of America. Lives were lost in the battle of righting societal wrongs during the 1960s.

I will forever remember the day Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was gunned downed in Memphis. I will never forget hearing the news that Medgar Evers was murdered in Jackson. Nor will I ever forget hearing the news from Philadelphia, Mississippi, that Schwerner, Goodman and Chaney were reported missing and the subsequent discovery of their bodies sometime later at the bottom of a damn.

There were also historical events that had significant impact but did not result in the loss of life during the 1960s. The television coverage of James Meredith as he enrolled at the University of Mississippi vividly depicted the outrage of a misguided state out of control.

The *whites only* and *colored* signs came down at the local doctors offices; the local burger stops eventually

GE Plastics
Bay St. Louis

Chemical Operations Technician

Mississippi State Employment Service will be accepting applications for individuals interested in being considered for open positions as chemical operations technicians at the GE Plastics facility in the Port Bienville Industrial Park new Bay St. Louis.

Applicants must have GED or be high school graduates, possess 2-3 years of work experience, a valid driver's license plus good math, science and mechanical skills. Successful applicants must be able to work in a team environment, have good interpersonal skills, be committed to achieving team success and continuously learn new skills. Applicants must be willing to work rotating 12-hour shifts.

Applications will only be accepted at the Mississippi State Employment Office, 3060 Longfellow Drive, Bay St. Louis, MS on:

Thursday, February 25th, 1:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.
Friday, February 26th, 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Saturday, February 27th, 8:00 a.m. - 12:00 Noon

Equal Opportunity Employer - M/F/D/V

MISSISSIPPI Star

PUBLISHER
Maurice E. Singleton, Jr.

ART DIRECTOR
Fontaine Graphics

ADVERTISING
Maurice E. Singleton, Jr.

BUSINESS MANAGER
Vonretta Singleton

Mississippi Star

Newsstand price:
$2.00
Annual subscription rate:
$16.00

For subscriptions, back issues and advertising inquiries please contact:

Mississippi Star
Post Office Box 2651
Bay St. Louis, MS 39521
228-463-1200

Mississippi Star is a monthly magazine published by Star Magazine, Inc.

moved away from their separate customer seating areas; and the *separate but equal* school systems became a thing of the past.

The current situation is far from perfect, but Mississippi has come a long way. My purpose for talking about the events of the 1960s is twofold: first, to pay tribute to the courageous people who stood up against the hate and evil; and secondly, to remind people that it is important to appreciate and make the most of the opportunities we have, now. We owe it to ourselves and the people who paid tremendously for the freedoms we presently enjoy.

There is a saying we often here that goes something like this: "How can you possibly know where you're going if you don't know where you've been?" I believe there's some truth to that, particularly when I see people from resourceful families who appear to be struggling to make it in this world.

By simply knowing our history is not a guarantee for success in this world. However, most successful people can usually point to someone - from usually a previous generation - who inspired their success. Personally, I believe that just about every person I've come in contact with have inspired me to at least desire to make a positive contribution to society.

Set aside some time to read about people who have made a difference in our communities, state and country. You, your child or relative or friend may realize inspiration to fulfill dreams. Your local library is loaded with autobiographies and biographies of inspiring personalities.

Let Us Know!

Please tell us of any youth programs - employment, camps or activities - that your church or civic organization is planning this summer.

Please submit information to he following address by March 8, 1999:

Mississippi Star
Summer Youth Programs
P.O. Box 2651
Bay St. Louis, MS 39521

★

Letters to the Publisher

should be 100 words or less.

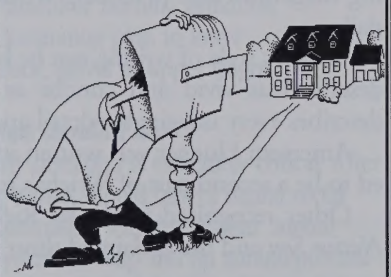
Star Calendar: Events of interest to South Mississippians should be submitted on your organization's letterhead, specifying the date, time, place of event and a number of contact. Submissions should be received by the twentieth day of the preceding month.

Be sure to include a daytime telephone number.

Mail submissions to

Mississippi Star, P.O. Box 2651, Bay St. Louis, MS 39521.

Mississippi Star reserves the right to refuse or decline to publish any submission.



MOVING? RECENTLY MOVED? ABOUT TO MOVE?

Please Drop Us A Line With Your New Address So You Can Be Sure To Receive Your Mississippi Star!

Tell Us What You Think About

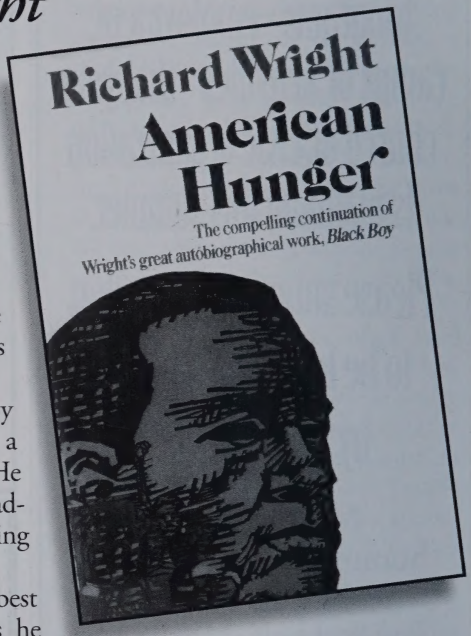
MISSISSIPPI *Star*

Express your point of view in a letter.

BOOK REVIEW

AMERICAN HUNGER

by Richard Wright



American Hunger is a compelling first person account of Natchez, Mississippi native, acclaimed author Richard Wright as he searches for his worth, dignity and place in America. As a young adult, Wright takes his readers through his transition to relative freedom in Chicago in the 1940s after growing up in the South.

Wright sustained himself by working odd jobs as a dishwasher, a postal worker and a store clerk. He develops his skills as a writer by reading magazines and practicing writing daily.

Wright's style of writing can be best described as vivid and concise as he describes every imaginable detail and thought.

American Hunger was written in the early 1940s and was originally intended to be a second part of Wright's renowned autobiography *Black Boy.*

Other recognized works by Richard Wright include *Uncle Tom's Children, Native Son* and the acclaimed short story, *Big Boy Leaves Home.*

Coming In March

MISSISSIPPI *Star*

- Winning Essays
- Mississippians in the NBA

& Much More!

Early detection

and treatment can help save your life.

An estimated 165,000 new cases of PROSTATE CANCER have occurred among men in the U.S. this year alone. Today, one out of ten men will develop prostate cancer by age 85.

Who is at risk?

Incidence increases with age. Over 80% of all prostate cancers are diagnosed in men over age 65. Rates are 40% higher for black men than white men.

What do I look for?

Prostate cancer warnings include:

- Weak or interrupted urine flow
- Inability to urinate
- Difficulty starting or stopping the urine flow
- The need to urinate frequently, especially at night
- Blood in the urine
- Painful or burning urination
- Continuing pain in lower back, pelvis or upper thighs

What should I do?

Early detection is extremely critical. After 40, a man should have a digital rectal examination with his regular annual physical checkup and an annual prostate-specific antigen (PSA) blood test at 50 and older. If you are experiencing any of the symptoms described here, contact your physician immediately.

For more information or a physician referral call:

865-DOCS (3627)

© Memorial Hospital at Gulfport, 1997

MHG

MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

AT GULFPORT

African American Person in History from whom you draw the most inspiration and what it is you most admire about this individual's example.

Dear Editor,

The African American person I would like to write about is Mr. Louis Piernas Jr. He was born on March 19, 1856 to Mr. Louis Piernas Sr. and Ms. Adalade Labat in Bay St. Louis.

The accomplishment I most admire about Mr. Piernas was he served as postmaster in Bay St. Louis during the administrations of Presidents Benjamin Harris, William McKinley and Theodore Roosevelt.

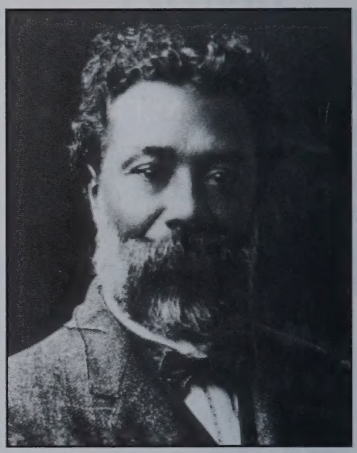
He was appointed a school trustee during the term of Mayor August Keller in 1887. In 1882 he served as secretary and auditor of the city of Bay St. Louis. He was elected to the board of supervisors of Hancock County representing Beat Five in 1884 and was re-elected to the same office in 1886.

IN addition to political affiliations, Mr. Piernas organized the Promote Benevolent Association in 1887 and did much work to better the cultural and educational life of negro people.

Mr. Piernas was the son of one of the first settlers of Bay St. Louis. His mother was the purchaser of the first piece of land sold in what is now Bay St. Louis.

Mr. Piernas was of French Negroid decent. There is a street in Bay St. Louis named after him: Louis Piernas St.

Mr. Piernas served as chairman of the executive committee of the Republican Party in Hancock County for 65 years. He was at one time a delegate to the Republican National Convention in Chicago.



Louis Piernas was the first Black man to serve as postmaster in Bay St. Louis.

Mr. Piernas died at his home in Bay St. Louis on July 25, 1954, at the age of 98. The funeral arrangements were under the direction of Fahey Funeral Home. Funeral services were held from his home with the Rev. Carlos Lewis, S.V.D. of St. Rose de Lima Church officiating.

Respectfully,
Olivia P. Hunter

P.S. In 1882 he married Mary Louise Barabino. Of this union there were no children. He had a host of nieces, nephews and other relatives.

Olivia P. Hunter is a niece of Mr. Louis Piernas, Jr.

Monti Electric Supply

Lighting Showrooms

GE & Challenger Circuit Protection
• Wiring Devices • Wire/Cable •
Industrial Lamps • Residential,
Commercial and Industrial Lighting
• Mobile Home Hook-up Supplies

Waveland **467-8246**

Ocean Springs **875-4777**

HANCOCK
MEDICAL·CENTER

Dedicated to providing the best in health services

149 DRINKWATER
BAY ST. LOUIS
467-8600

Leasing with Baber's is easy and convenient.
We rent TV's, VCR's, electronics, furniture,
appliances, computers, and more!

We're here when you need us. Free delivery, no credit hassles.

BABER'S LEASING

Call or visit the location nearest you. ***Come! Look! Lease!***

KERN OPTICAL, INC.

4 Locations to Serve You!

NORTH GULFPORT 864-4397

BAY ST. LOUIS 467-4666

TEAGARDEN RD. AT 90 896-6556

D'IBERVILLE 392-7455

M-F 9am-5pm Sat 9am-Noon

One Day Service in Most Cases!

$10 off *Transitions® Lenses*

$10 off *No-Line Bi-Focals*

Essay Contest

HIGH SCHOOL JUNIORS & SENIORS

THEME:

I Am One Piece of a Big Puzzle Called Life in this World

TWO PRIZES: $100 Savings Bond

Winning Essays will be published in March 1999 Issue of Mississippi Star.

CONTEST RULES: Essays should be 250-300 words in length and must be typed (double spaced). All entries must be received by March 5,1999 at the following address:

Mississippi Star Essay Contest
P.O. Box 2651 • Bay St. Louis 39521

ALWAYS Coca-Cola

STATE FARM Auto Life Fire INSURANCE
Felicia Craft-Palmer

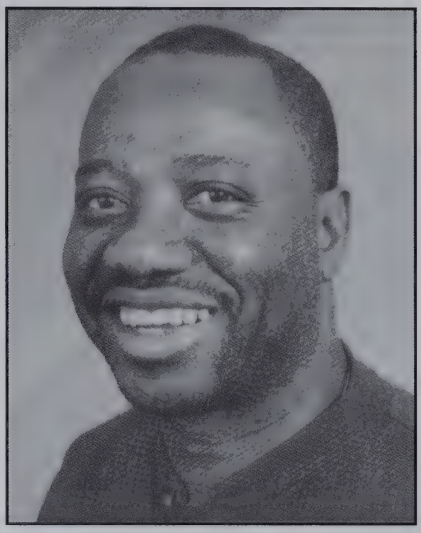
Domino's Pizza®

WENDY'S

Maria M. Moman, M.D.
OBSTETRICS AND GYNECOLOGY

HANCOCK BANK 100 YEARS 1899-1999
Celebrating A Century Of Service

LUKE TRAYLOR



Luke Traylor is the financial executive director of the Naval Meteorology and Oceanography Command at John C. Stennis Space center in Hancock County. He is responsible for a $250 million annual operating budget. He guided the command through the 1998 fiscal year closeout procedures, culminating in the best year-end obligation rates in the organization's history,

Traylor's management of accounts and assistance to subordinate activities enabled smooth and continuous financial execution during a time of rapid and far-reaching policy changes and modifications to the accounting process. Traylor's success in this position led to him being nominated as the Mississippi Coast Association of Federal Administrators (MCAFA) Outstanding Federal Civilian Employee of the Year 1998.

Traylor is an active member of Pentecost Baptist Church in Slidell, Louisiana, where he provides financial management support. He also volunteers his time and assistance to church and community members, providing free tax preparation service for the elderly and low-income families.

In 1993, Traylor founded the Slidell Church Basketball League, involving 42 children the first year. The League has since grown to approximately 500 youth from Slidell and surrounding communities. He is also vice president of the Slidell Little League Athletic Association, an organization that provides children with mentors and role models and the opportunity to compete in baseball and other summer recreational activities.

Traylor is a native of West Palm Beach, Florida, and a graduate of the University of South Florida in Tampa. He is the son of Luther and Sarah Traylor.

Rip Daniels Is About Business

by Maurice Singleton, Jr.

Rip Daniels said that he never dreamed a dream - in business - that he did not subsequently make happen. When one takes a look into a day in the life of Daniels, one might conclude that the busy South Mississippi entrepreneur doesn't allow himself enough time to sleep in order to dream. However, when you take a closer look, you see very clearly that not only does he dream, but he systematically and vigorously pursues his dreams as if they were directives.

Daniels is best known as the host of WJZD's hit morning talk show *It's A New Day.* The two-hour call-in talk show, however, is where he spends only a fraction of his time. Daniels changes gears between the radio business and his real estate and construction businesses all day long. And all day means *all day.* A typical day for Daniels starts at about four in the morning and doesn't usually end until sometime after midnight.

"I like business. I like capitalism. I do real estate and radio twenty-four seven," said Daniels. "I interact simultaneously with real estate and radio. I have a twenty four-hour business with the radio station. I do whatever's got to be done. It's not work. It's not like I dread it.

"It doesn't take more energy for me to do what I do than it takes a guy who works eight hours a day. Work to me isn't cumbersome, especially with the advent of telephone. Now, you don't have to be there to be there. I can handle more things on the telephone."

Handling various projects at the same time appears to be an enjoyable challenge for Daniels. The more the merrier. As a contractor, Daniels builds anywhere from three to five houses each year. He buys and sells real estate. And, in addition to his on-air show, he is CEO of WJZD, Inc. as well as CEO of Daniels Real Estate, Inc. Each requires a great deal of time and energy, neither of which stresses him.

With his father, Mr. Sandy Daniels at his side, Rip inspects the former site of his radio station that will now house valuable satellite dishes.

"I enjoy this life," he explained. "I go for it. What else am I going to do? If I don't want it all, what makes me think

I'm going to get a little. I don't concentrate on what I have to lose when I am dealing in business. I concentrate on what I have to gain in dealing with anybody in business.

"I've always enjoyed feeling a sense of worth. Society's expectations of me are far less than my expectations of myself," said Daniels. "I have great expectations of me. Fulfilling those expectations is not work. It is a mission. It is what you do. And as my mom would say, 'Nobody can beat you doing what you do.' That's what I do.

"I don't have a fear of failure. I have never thought that I wouldn't do something. If I have a fifty-fifty chance of doing something, that's great for me. When it depends on my ability and I have a fifty percent chance, I can only win. I have no fear, because I don't have doubt. I don't doubt me at all."

Daniels explained that his approach to life and business is more the result of desperation than innate drive or will.

"It's not really drive as it is a way of thinking," he explained. "I've never loss anything that I really had to have. I guess I am a hopeless optimistic. I've never known how to be negative. I got whippings for saying, 'I can't.' When you take the 'can't' out that means that you've got to start learning how."

Daniels learned how - to host a radio talk show and to manage a radio station as well as build houses and buy and sell real estate.

The radio business found Daniels. He was more interested in business. Radio was more of an "aside." But radio always found him. Starting in 1971, Daniels got involved with campus broadcasting while in college. Stints at various Coast radio stations followed, including WTAM, WQFX, WQID and WVMI. In 1987 Daniels was selected over several other applicants for the new frequency in South Mississippi. Seven years later, on March 20, 1994, WJZD-FM began broadcasting.

For nearly five years, Daniels has hosted *It's A New Day,* a popular two-hour call-in conversation show. The program is the most listened to conversation show in South Mississippi.

With less than two days of notice and preparation, Daniels and his staff successfully broadcasted Rev. Jesse Jackson's speech on a visit to the Coast in January.

"I try to keep the show current and issue-oriented," said Daniels. "It is not designed to be an interview show. The true stars on *A New Day* are the callers, those individuals who are able to express their opinions. That's the meat of it. When people call in on talk radio, they don't necessarily call in to listen to the stars, they don't want to listen to the expert. They want to listen to what everyone else is saying. From that they get a good jest of society."

Daniels said he feels that any radio station that expects to survive in the next

millennium has to empower the listener. "You just can't entertain the listener," he explained. "You have got to become a very viable and a very necessary entity for that listener. Even if they're listening to you to keep up with the time, you have got to provide something besides music, because any station can do that. A CD player can do that. They have to listen to you to get some pertinent information."

Of the more than one thousand *It's A New Day* segments that have been broadcasted on WJZD since March of 1994, the series of shows Daniels hosted during

Daniels going through daily ritual of changing gears from radio to real estate.

the times of the church bombings appear to have been the most important to him. He doesn't really recall particular shows, however he easily recalls the times he played Mahalia Jackson's *Summertime* every time another church was torched.

"The church bombings was really something that even to this day, I haven't gotten over," said Daniels. "I cannot believe that in 1994 how apathetic people were to one hundred year old churches being bombed. The mainstream media paid absolutely no attention to it until as late as 1997."

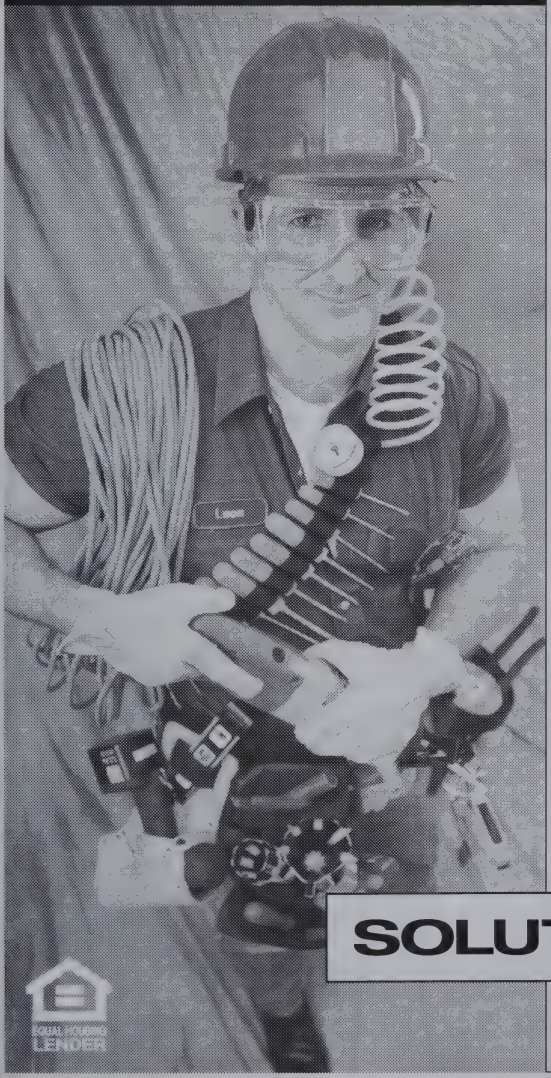
Despite what he believes has been apathy by mainstream media, Daniels has maintained his objectivity as a journalist, as evidenced by segments of *It's A New Day* in which he allowed former Ku Klux Klan leader David Duke and white supremacist Richard Barrett to express their points of view. Daniels said that his responsibility as a journalist is to allow his listeners to hear what's out there.

"When you don't allow all the information to flow, like during the days of Hitler burning books, then you are indoctrinating your audience," Daniels explained. "You're controlling the information for them. That's not for any entity to do. It is far better to provide all the information, no matter how repulsive the opinions, so that people can make their own minds up.

"The Richard Barretts and the David Dukes will show themselves for what they are. And it is better for people to be able to draw their own opinions based upon what they hear from the horse's mouth rather than the assumptions of other people. I don't know how many other people, how many other audiences or communities that have had the opportunity to actually talk with David Duke. I have allowed them that opportunity to ask whatever question, to evaluate his views. So it doesn't give them an audience. I can't say any figure - I stop short of saying leader - is all bad, all good at what they believe.

"Was it Will Rogers who said...'he never met a man he didn't like"? Until you get to know that person, you don't what they think until you hear what they have to express. Once you understand where they are coming from you can either agree with their opinion or you don't. There may be some common ground on other opinions. I think that it is important that I allow my listeners to be the mature, thinking listeners that they

What you do may be a little out of the ordinary. So are our home loans.



Meet Leon,

contractor and professional carpenter. For him, building houses is easy. But putting together a loan application when you own your own business can be an entirely different story.

No big deal. With Union Planters' E*asy*E*xpress* Mortgage, Leon's loan application was on the level. And because there are *no income or employment verifications,* he had an answer on his home loan in no time at all. And 90% less paperwork really nailed it home.

So if you don't have the most typical job, call us at 863-4582 in Gulfport or 435-6600 in Biloxi. We can lay the foundation for your new home with a lot less hassle.

SOLUTION: UNION PLANTERS BANK℠

EQUAL HOUSING LENDER

All loans subject to credit approval.
©Copyright 1999 Union Planters Bank.
Member FDIC. www.unionplanters.com

are and make their own minds up, be it extremists or pacifists."

The Voice of the African American Community?

"I have never considered myself as the voice of the African American community.," said Daniels. "If anything, I am the ear of the African American community. I don't know of any other institution or agency that has the reach that we have, the electronic medium that listens everyday, five days a week and allows the world to listen to what the African American community thinks. Not only the African American community, but any community. But just because of the fact most of my listeners are probably African American, I allow them the opportunity. So, we listen. I could never be the voice of the African American community. But the African American community would never have a voice in total unless they utilize WJZD and other media."

WJZD, Inc. Success

"The revenues we have generated have been excellent. Between real estate and radio, our revenue is hovering around seven digits. For a five year old company that's pretty good. We are very much in the black. We've been very, very blessed. I don't know of many companies that can say that in five years they can see where they can be debt-free. I have very little debt. I think as a business, particularly as an African American-owned business, we're pretty solvent. And I feel very good about that. I feel very good about the fact that I offer my employees - fifteen people - health insurance.

A Man of Principles

"I will never ever compromise my commitment to my children.," said Daniels. "They will always have something to work with. I will never ever compromise their future in the way of real estate. I won't benefit nearly from my efforts as my offspring and their offspring. I am always negotiating from a standpoint of, not whether I benefit, but whether my family will benefit. That becomes my principles. I won't sell to a person I perceive not worthy of what it is I have to sell. It's not just a money thing. I am not motivated by that. There are some people I won't sell to, or buy from. I am a man of very, very great principles. And that sometimes impairs the deal.

"I have no agenda but to do good business, feed my family and provide information so that we can have an informed electorate. However my listener perceives me, I would hope at the very least they would give me the benefit of the doubt and go by what they know I mean, and how they know I am, and what they know I meant, rather than what someone else speculates. I will talk to anybody at any time. It's sad some time how deadly and cruel our people are with each other. I've always heard that misery loves company. Sometimes I've heard some people say some very hateful things, and you realize that those hateful things can also affect the children of the person you're talking about. It really takes a very small person to do that. So, however they perceive me, I don't evaluate me based on how I am perceived.

"If you don't know where you're going, any road will take you there," is how Daniels closes his show, *It's a New Day.* It is quite apparent that he has not taken just "any road" in his pursuits as a source of information and businessman.

Daniels understands that he can not control other's perceptions of him, particularly because he takes risks and calls it as he sees it. What he does hope, if not expect of his audience is that, "You knew where he was coming from. You didn't have to guess."

KNIGHT-ABBEY

COMMERCIAL PRINTING & DIRECT MAIL

- Full-Service Commercial Printer
- Quick Copy to Full Color
- Typesetting & Graphic Design - PC and Mac
- Full Bindery Services
- Direct Mail
- Pick-Up and Delivery

With 2 Convenient Locations!

BILOXI

315 Caillavet Street

(228) 374-3298 ◆ (800) 844-6552

Fax (228) 374-3304

HATTIESBURG

108 Sheffield Loop, Suite B

(601) 579-9672 ◆ (800) 844-6552

Fax (601) 579-9671

READING...

Brightens

our outlook of the world around us.

Enlightens

us in many areas of life

Heightens

our chances for success in a competitive world

Practice Reading Everyday and Encourage Children to Read!

SPONSORED BY

GE Plastics
Bay St. Louis

WHITNEY

PEPSI

MISSISSIPPI *Star*

IT'S BLACK HISTORY MONTH. WHAT DOES THAT MEAN TO ME?

by Bruce Northridge

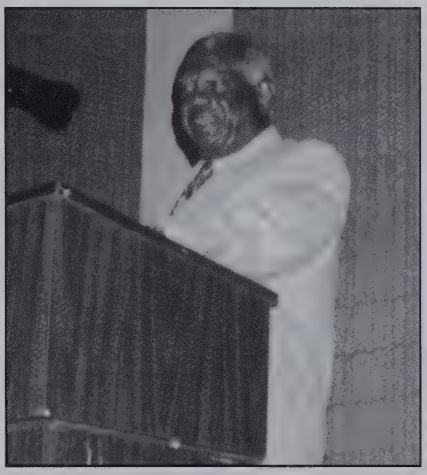
Given the saying -- "Those who do not remember the past are condemned to repeat it" -- I believe it's important for every American, no matter what color he/she is, to know the story of the struggle for justice by blacks in America.

On December 12, 1998, I was attending the Southern Human Rights Organizers Conference at Jackson State University. Thanks to the guest speaker, I was about to get the "short course" in Black History. The speaker was J.L. Chestnut, Jr. For those who don't know -- he's an enigmatic figure, central to much of the progress of civil rights in the Black Belt of Alabama; Selma's first black lawyer (1958) and, for a long time, the only black attorney in Selma; a key figure in winning Voting Rights for blacks in 1965; still active in 1999, having just won a landmark decision in a suit brought against the Dept of Agriculture on behalf of black farmers; a great oral historian. His telling of the events of Bloody Sunday was as gripping an account of any historical event as I've ever heard.

But ... to get the most out of the lesson, the gifted teacher knows that the context of the story is critical. As a 40-something white male from "up North", I certainly had no knowledge, from experience, of the Old South.

I had heard of "White Only" and "Colored Only" water fountains. I'd heard of different sections of the movie theater for blacks and for whites. Two thoughts --

(1) When I moved to Mississippi in 1977, my perception/presumption was that those were things that had happened in the past ... the distant past when people didn't know any better. Come to find out, it hasn't been that long ago.



J.L Chestnut, Jr. addresses Southern Human Rights Organizers Conference at Jackson State University.

(2) The more the victims of segregation use the water fountain/movie theater examples to describe what segregation was like, the more I suspect the non-affected among us (e.g., whites; young blacks born after 1970) view it as nothing more than inconveniences. Yes, it probably was embarrassing not to have access to public bathrooms downtown. Yes, it was no doubt humiliating to have to go to the back of the bus. But [I imagine young folks thinking], what was the big deal?

J.L. Chestnut gives the best "short

course". In person, or in his book *"Black in Selma"*, he will tell you "what's the big deal". He talked about "the blanket of fear that covered the South ... so thick, it was hard to breathe". Not only were there economic dependencies and social dependencies that were oppressive, but, he explained, the psychological hold was most pervasive. "The police were blatant," he tells his audience. "They were in black Selma deliberately doing things to send messages of fear across the community. They weren't a neutral force enforcing the law. They were the law. They acted like despots, slapped black men who didn't say "sir" fast enough, extorted payoffs, demanded information, and pretty much took what they wanted when they wanted it from whoever had it."

Inevitably, the young and non-affected now ask -- Why didn't the black folks in the community rise up and protest? The masterful teacher anticipates these kinds of questions. His insightful analysis of the situation is revealed often through the stories in his life, as well as the story of his life.

(1) Why not rise up? Perhaps because they were down so low. The oppression could be so dehumanizing. "I began to understand that something awful was going on with my father's friend. A policeman was involved with the man's wife. The man worked on the railroad, and I'd see him coming home from work. When he got to the corner, he'd always look down toward his house in the next block. If the policeman's car was parked in front of it, he'd come in my father's store, drink a Coke, talk about hunting dogs, and wait til the car left. My father and his friends said nothing about it. There was a kind of unspoken consensus that it could happen to anyone."

(2) Why not protest? A neighbor was badly beaten by the police out in full view of the neighborhood, perhaps for missing some kickback payment. Black folks just shook their heads and went back inside without saying a word. The cops pulled away; black Selma went back to business as usual. "That was what really frightened me -- the way my father and the other men removed this from mind, as if it hadn't happened. Their silence, the way they turned their backs without a peep of protest, stood in such painful contrast to the masculine bravado they carried on with each other in the store" over non-white topics like fishing and hunting.

(3) Why not organize against this oppression? This "short course" compels us to understand the division within the community. Three distinct groups were described.

The first, and perhaps the largest, were those who were so controlled by the system that they became so apathetic, they're convinced that nothing they could do could change the system. [J.L.'s own father was one.]

The second group were those who found reasons not to change. They may be self-serving reasons [as in the case of the Uncle Toms]; they may be based on some misplaced loyalty to some white folks who were kind to them; often in generations-old paternal relationships. [J.L.'s mother was one.] J.L. called these black folks "accomodationists".

The third group were the few who went looking for a way to make the change.

To the first group, J.L. Chestnut gives his "Probability of Miracles" talk. To the second group, he gives his favorite Frederick Douglass quote. And to the third group --

We honor them when we say, we will never forget March 7, 1965.

Had been on the phone with the NAACP Legal Defense folks in NY. Thurgood Marshall would say -- "Tell Martin we don't need any more in jail. We're only looking for 3 or 4 test cases." Dr King

would say – "I'm not interested in the court of law. I'm interested in the court of public opinion."

And so the march was on.

And 300 State Police stood, with gas masks and billie clubs the size of baseball bats. And behind them, the posse; 150 local white men in khaki uniforms, mounted on fidgety horses. And here came John Lewis and our small rag-tag group across the Edmund Pettus Bridge.

A white voice called out: "Turn back. This is as far as you go."

John Lewis knelt down; began to pray. The men, women, and some teens from the high school also knelt. Silence.

Then ... a tear-gas canister hit the pavement, and all hell broke loose. The folks on the phone from NY were asking, "What's going on?" Through the haze of tear gas, I saw a posse man raise his club -- the size of a baseball bat -- and smash it down on a woman's head ... as if he were splitting a watermelon.

J.L. Chestnut re-lives that moment when he tells his audience what he saw that day. A sadness overcomes him when he tells folks what he felt that day ... how he gave up hope ... how he gave up hope in America, in white people, in the basic goodness of man. Then he straightens his shoulders and says -- but Martin didn't lose faith. Dr King put out the call. If you believe in what's right; if you believe in America; if you believe ... come to Selma.

First a few. Then more. Then ... an ocean!!! A rainbow of humanity flooded Selma. White people hand in hand with black people, protesting, organizing, and ... celebrating! The day after Bloody Sunday, President Johnson went to Congress with the Voting Rights Act. The next week, Selma went from 150 black voters to 10,000. Martin was right. This is the real America.

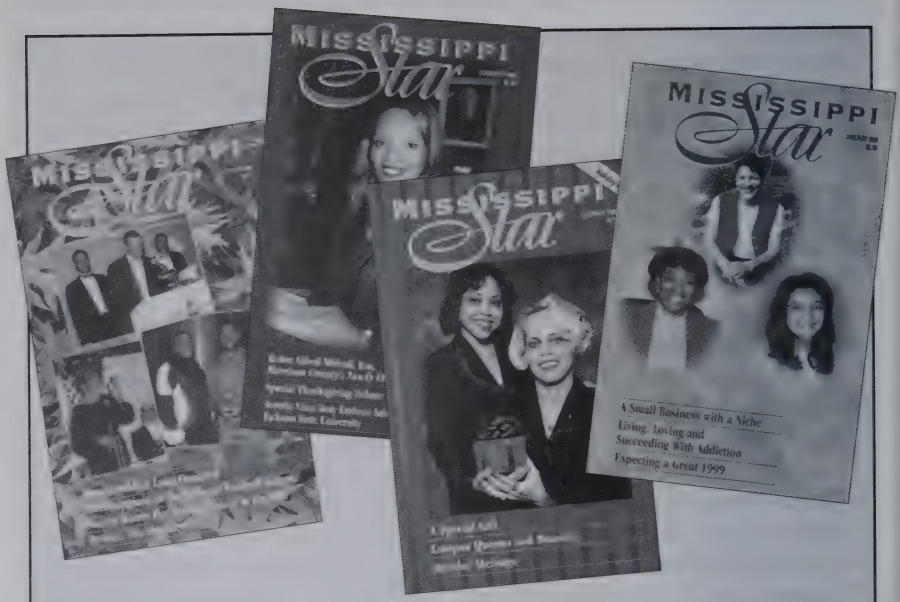
* The Probability of Miracles

"...in black America, it is common to hear what can't be done. Too many of us are obsessed with the impossible. Four hundred years of slavery and segregation have had an awesome impact on the black mind. There is a powerful negativism in every black community and pressing problems of dope, crime, children having children, illiteracy, and hopelessness. There is some Negro and some slave in every black American you meet.

But we have only been free since 1965. The fact that we have survived is a miracle, and some of us have thrived. Black people ought have no problems believing in miracles. In India, a baby bull elephant is tied by the leg to a tree. He tries to free himself, can't, and eventually gives up. A grown elephant is a massive creature, strong enough to uproot a tree, yet he can be restrained by a little rope tied to a sapling. It is the elephant's mind, not the rope, that enslaves him. We need to unshackle our minds and rise above the limits others impose on us and the limitations we impose on ourselves."

** Frederick Douglass

"If there is no struggle, there is no progress. Those who profess to favor freedom yet deprecate agitation are men who want crops without plowing the ground. They want rain without thunder and lightning. They want the ocean without the awful roar of its mighty waters. The struggle may be a moral one or it may be a physical one or it may be both moral and physical. But it must be a struggle. Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and never will ... Men may not get all they pay for in this world, but they must certainly pay for all they get."



ORDER A SUBSCRIPTION TO

MISSISSIPPI *Star*

It Makes A Great Gift, Too!

12 Months $16.00

☐ Yes! Please send me the next 12 issues of *Mississippi Star* at the address below. Enclosed is a check to cover the cost of my subscription at the low, introductory rate.

Name: _____

Street: _____

City: _____ St: _____ Zip: _____

Please photocopy this form or provide the information requested and mail to:

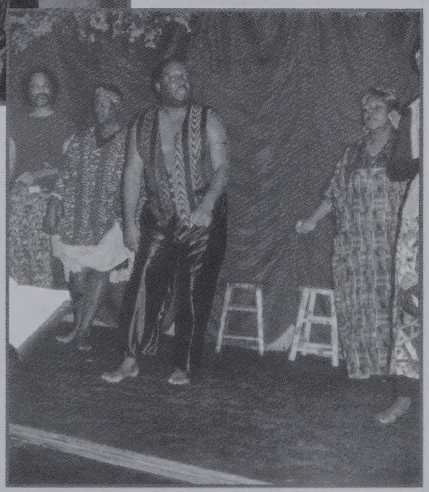
Mississippi Star • P.O. Box 2651 • Bay St. Louis, MS 39521

If ordering additional subscriptions, please enclose payment and address information.

BRIEFS

Dream Girl: First-grader Ariel Graham prepares nervously for her moment on stage at Moss Point's East Park Elementary's Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. celebration on January 14. Ariel played an "E" in the children's kinetic illustration of the famous "I Have A Dream" speech.

Chari Lee and Al Acker played leading roles in *Once On This Island.*



Charles Joseph, Sheila Twiggs, Al Acker and Mel Raboteau in scene from *Once On This Island* performed at Bay St. Louis Little Theater in January.

CALENDAR

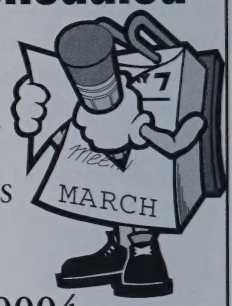
NAACP REGULARLY MONTHLY MEETINGS

BAY ST. LOUIS BRANCH
2nd Tuesday
St. Rose de Lima Catholic Church

GULFPORT BRANCH
1st Monday
Isiah Fredericks
Community Center

BILOXI BRANCH
4th Thursday
Branch Office - Main Street

Inform Us of Your Scheduled Events!



MAIL:
Mississippi Star
P.O. Box 2651
Bay St. Louis, MS
39521
FAX:
601-463-0004

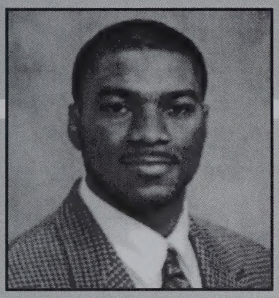
S & L
Office Supplies, Inc.
Business Cards • Rubber Stamps
FAX • Copies • Office Machines
308 Choctaw Village - Suite F
Waveland, MS 39576
(228)467-0002
Fax (228)467-0034

Designer Touch Florist & Wedding Consultants
"The Little Shop with a Big Heart"
FLOWERS FOR ALL OCCASIONS
922 SEARS AVENUE •
WAVELAND, MS 39576
(228)463-1231
Fax (228)463-9384

BAY CITY GRILL
EST. 1997
Feast upon delicious seafood entrees, charbroiled steaks & unique pasta dishes in a traditional New Orleans style setting. Appropriate wines & spirits to complement your dinner selection.
Enjoy a memorable dining experience in a casual atmosphere... Located across from the historical Bay St. Louis Train Depot
136 Blaize Ave. • Bay St. Louis, MS
466-0590

TAX TIME!
WILMA'S Income Tax Service
Have your taxes prepared professionally
PERSONAL AND SMALL BUSINESS
WILMA PETERS
(228) 831-2281

We Put People First On And Off The Field

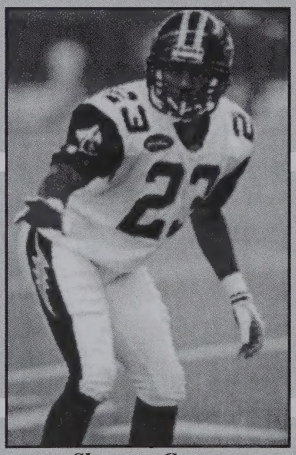


Shannon Garrett
Loan Officer
The People's Bank

Six months out of the year Shannon Garrett is a loan officer at our Gulfport Branch. The other six months he is a defensive back for the Winnipeg Blue Bombers.

At the Peoples Bank, we have been putting people first for 100 years. In Shannon's case that means holding his job for him while he plays football in Canada each year.

The next time you're in our Gulfport Branch, be sure to say hi to Shannon and wish him luck in the upcoming season!



Shannon Garrett
Defensive Back
Winnipeg Blue Bombers

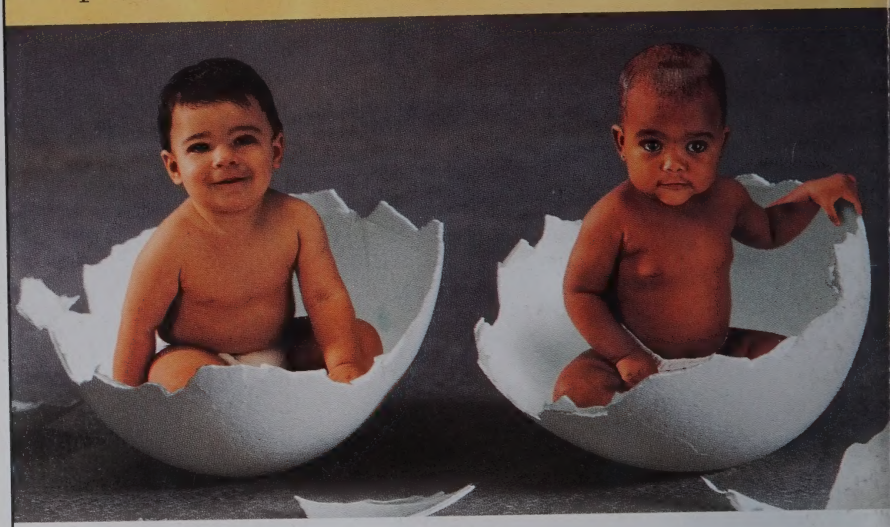
THE PEOPLES BANK

MEMBER FDIC

Where People Come First

(601) 435-5511 864-2252 467-9296

Special deliveries made daily.



Having a baby is an amazing journey. It's also a very busy one. That's why we work hard to find ways to make your pregnancy a little easier and a little more special. In fact, we've created a new program for expectant mothers called Bright Beginnings. It offers educational materials and benefits to prepare you for pregnancy, delivery and caring for your new baby, including: monthly newsletters on childbirth and pregnancy, tours of maternity units and new baby nurseries, a free infant car seat, and a special gift upon leaving the hospital. All you need to do is pre-register for delivery at a Tenet HealthSystem hospital and attend our free prenatal classes. **For more information about Bright Beginnings call us at 1-888-TENET-4U.**

Gulf Coast
Medical Center

TENET.